

Study visit group report

Group No	230
Title of the visit	Tackling early school leaving
Topic	Measures to prevent early school leaving
City, country	Delft The Netherlands
Type of visit	V
Dates of visit	10.03.2013 - 14.03.2013
Group reporter	Adrienn Györy

I FINDINGS

The group was constituted of 12 participants representing 9 different countries. Vast majority of the group members were primarily involved in the field of education as teachers, headmasters, quality managers or counsellors in primary, secondary and vocational schools, researchers as well as administrators at local or regional level.

1. One of the objectives of the study visits programme is to exchange examples of good practice among hosts and participants. Cedefop will select well-described projects/programmes/initiatives and disseminate them to former participants and a wider public, including potential partners for future projects. Therefore it is important that you identify and describe all aspects that, in your view, make these projects/programmes/initiatives successful and worth exploring.

The study visit was devoted to the issue of Early school-leaving (ESL). It provided an opportunity to familiarize with the different responses of national education policies to the examined issues throughout Europe with special attention to the host country, the Netherlands. Great asset of the study visit was its practice-oriented approach. Therefore the main focal point was to introduce us to the local, innovative practices taken to combat ESL. Similarly, as most of the participants were experts from the field, most of the discussion addressed locally recognized problems and local practices countering the phenomenon. The programme of the study visit was very well-structured and diverse. Each day was devoted to a specific sub-topic, to a particular approach.

It was worth to explore the multi-layered system introduced to increase quality of education in the Netherlands. First of all, a digital registration system was adopted in order to identify ESL-s and investigate the issue. On the one hand the publicly available and easily comparable data are wisely used to trigger positive competitiveness between schools as well as to connect better and worse-performing institutions facilitating transfer of best-practices. On the other hand, financial incentives were raised by granting extra subsidies bound to clear targets set by the Ministry of

Education. As the most crucial factor the group considers the far-reaching autonomy granted to schools enabling them to respond to local needs and tendencies.

In most of the states represented by the participants some of these elements are observable, however none of the countries responded the ESL in such a complex manner using different types of motivations for schools. The upcoming days were intended to demonstrate and discuss the various ways of implementation of the national policy - see the following Table.

Table 1: List of good practices learnt during the study-visit

Title of the project/programme /initiative	Country	Name of the institution that implements it	Contact person (if possible) who presented the programme to the group	Whom the project/ programme/ initiative addresses	What features of the project/programme/initiative make it an example of good practice
DROPS Dropout prevention in schools.	The Netherlands	The Municipality of s-Hertogenbosch	Theo van de Veerdonk	All the persons working with students in danger of dropping out of school. People in schools, at the social services and companies.	A network of people already working with students dropping out of school. Bringing all these together to cooperate so money and time is well spent and the effort is directed at working with individual students. The project involves companies as well.
Leerbanen Ambassadors	The Netherlands	The Municipality of s-Hertogenbosch	Ton van der Bersselaar	Students in provactional sschool, students in vocational school and unemployed young people.	Action plan to find and create more learning jobs, apprenticeships. Among other things done is to find and engage so called ambassadors who as influential individuals in companies and interest groups can highly help finding a job and can contribute to the students' successful integration to labour market.
So you think you can think.	The Netherlands	KW1C s-Hertogenbosch	Harry van der Schans	Students in general (teachers for students)	KW1C is actively encouraging students to think about their thinking. Learn about how they learn and use creativity. Innovative classrooms, learning about the influence we can have on our thinking, various approaches to learning. The teacher takes the role of a facilitator not a teacher in it classical meaning.
Successklas	The Netherlands	KW1C s-Hertogenbosch	Roger van der Akker and Arnoud Mortier	Students that want to drop their studies because they feel they	Students get direct and collaborative positive coaching to learn about themselves. THE FOCUS IN ON EACH STUDENT. They can enter the program any time. Teachers contact

				do not find that they have selected the right path.	parents, social workers, and other persons that have something to do with the personal progress of the student.
The golden triangle	The Netherlands	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.	Martine Soethout	Ministry of Education, Municipalities and Schools.	An agreement between three public authorities and stakeholders on actions and local agendas to fight Early School Leaving. Agreed aims and autonomy of municipalities and schools to work on their own situation.
Educational Identification number	The Netherlands	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.	Martine Soethout	Ministry of Education and all stakeholders who work with students.	All progress of students and their current status is updated regularly in a database on education and practice. Attendance and study progress can be monitored as well as training in workplaces etc.
Mentoring	The Netherlands	Mentor Programme Friesland	Szilvia Simon s.siomn@froc.nl	Students and others who want personal assistance.	An established person becomes a personal mentor to a young person, guiding him/her on personal development and empowering him/her.
Parent's coffee	France, la Reunion	College du chaudron Ce.9741208v@ac-reunion.fr http://college-lechaudron.ac-reunion.fr	Marie-Christine CELAURE	Pupil's parents	Parents come to school and participate in preparing food for students. This involves parents so they will not be only visitors at school. The parents can also share ideas and suggestions about the way they can participate in the schoolwork of the children and get some guidance
Vocational carousel, NSK course	Iceland	VMA. http://www.vma.is	Harpa Jorundardottir harpajora@vma.is	Students in danger of dropping out of school.	A group of students for one semester experiencing workshops in the school, they have simple projects in each workshop for two weeks at each place and then try the next workshop. Altogether 7 workshops.
Enhance self-confidence and potentials of pupils.	France, Martinique.	College Rose Saint-Just ce.9720025v@ac-martinique.fr	Thierry BOUCHARD	Pupils in danger of dropping out of school.	Pupils get help to elaborate on their personal training pathway. Teachers, social workers, career counsellors, psychologists and companies tutor pupils to help them find their interests and plan their future.
Pedagogy with a	Belgium	GO Onderwijs	Anja	Teachers, parents and	Looking at pedagogical methods with the perspective of

moral perspective.		van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap Belgium	Preuveneers anja.preuveneers@g-o.be	students.	democratic moral values, human rights, rights of children, freedom of speech and tolerance.
PCPIs (Programs for early professional qualification)	Basque Country, Spain	B06 Berritzegune, Zaratamo Spain	Maria Luz Martínez b06ingelea@gmail.com	Pupils in compulsory school, not aiming for academic studies.	The program offers the possibility of learning a job while finishing Compulsory Secondary Education. Most students get their compulsory secondary education certificate. Most students go on doing vocational training courses.
Supporting actions with students' parents.	Italy	ENGIM Artigianelli, Torino	Massimo Bonaglia massimo.bonaglia@engim.it	Parents of pupils that need help	Parents are supported to deal with difficulties with their children in two ways: Group meetings: parents can meet other adults who live their same condition, get information about specific topics, share their problems and difficulties and look for answers and strategies Individual talks: parents can bring problems about their specific situations and get individual psychological support. Useful information and strategies of these moments are brought to tutors and coordinators
Individual tutoring actions and talks with students (by school tutors)	Italy	ENGIM, Artigianelli, Torino	Massimo Bonaglia massimo.bonaglia@engim.it	Students	Talking with a "professional" adult (with counselling skills) it's a good occasion for students to think about themselves, their difficulties and resources giving students a "reality feedback" helps them to realize what they're doing and what are the effects of their actions and choices this is a good occasion to start thinking about their future (near and far), to define objectives and to plan actions and strategies to reach them
Supporting service for teachers and students	Estonia	Rakvere Vocational School	Piret-Torm- Mirontsik	Students and teachers	Implemented supporting service for teachers and students. Involves career-coordinator, psychologist, educationalist, recreation manager, school's nurse, teachers and schoolboard members Systematic work for supporting students and teachers (behavioural problems, early school leaving, learning debts)

Springboard Programme	Hungary	Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities (non-profit Ltd.) in cooperation with vocational schools	Adrienn Györy adrienn.gyory@budapestinstitut.e.eu	Students with low motivation and difficulty.	One-year catch-up course between primary and secondary education 2 nd chance for youngsters at the age of 16-23 years Preparatory phase: training teachers as well as educoaching, mentoring, designing teaching materials and an innovative learning environment - Individual development plans consultation between the student, their parents and the teacher
Prevention of early school leaving	France, Martinique	Collège Rose Saint-Just, La Trinité, Martinique – France	Thierry BOUCHARD thierry.bouchard@ac-martinique.fr	Pupils in need of direction and not aiming for academic studies.	Partnerships with companies- Enhance the pupils potentials - Classroom with a small number of pupils
Unga på gang (Youth on the move)	Jarfalla, Sweden	Education department, Järfälla, Sweden	Kirsti Jolma kirsti.jolma@jarfalla.se	Students at risk of dropping out and Young people (16-20 years)	A current “youth” list updates once per day. Follow up of every young people. Very close cooperation with Social services, employment services and local businesses. Action plan to follow up. Focus on the person! Good results in a short time.
Consultancy, guiding and testing for success in schools for adults	Germany (Hesse)	Hessisches Kultusministerium, Staatliches Schulamt für den Landkreis Gießen und den Vogelsbergkreis	Arno.Bernhardt@gi.ssa.lsa.hessen.de	Headteachers, teachers	The project includes elements of consultancy and testing before the students join the school and is combined with individually coached learning processes inside school

2. The study visits programme aims to promote and support policy development and cooperation in lifelong learning. That is why it is important to know what you learnt about such policies and their implementation during your visit. You are invited to describe your findings concerning the following:

2.1 **APPROACHES TAKEN BY PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (BOTH HOST AND PARTICIPANTS') REGARDING THE THEME OF THE VISIT. ARE THERE ANY SIMILAR APPROACHES/MEASURES IN PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES? WHAT ASPECTS ARE SIMILAR AND WHY? WHAT ASPECTS ARE DIFFERENT AND WHY?**

Most of the states introduced or at least supported initiatives, programmes against ESL at national, regional and local level. The main features of ESL-s and the risk-factors including social and family background, personal issues, troubles, lack of motivation and vision for the future, etc. correspond throughout the countries. Of course, local and individual circumstances can highly influence the magnitude of these problems.

In the participating countries the group identified roughly three or four main streams of approaches including both preventive and intervention measures. First of all, in various countries there are nation-wide systematic educational reforms, centralization-decentralization procedures, methodological approaches attempting to reform teaching process, changes in the roles of teachers and their relation to the child. Modifications concern the curricula, the ways and methods of teaching. Priorities tend to shift towards inclusive education, focus on individual needs of students and skill-development. While in some states data gathering and monitoring form the basis of policies, some states are still struggling in collecting and systemizing and make benefit of comparable data.

Secondly, we can distinguish programmes which intend to deal with specific sub-issues, risk-factors. For example the first academic year of vocational training disposes the highest risk of ESL. In order to reduce the number of ESL-s specialized programmes were introduced - mostly on local basis - such as focus on personal development, strengthening self-esteem and self-confidence of students, offering career counselling, etc.

Thirdly, more effort is directed at bridging secondary education and labour market. Deeper cooperation is sought both in relation to the skills demanded in the free labour market as well as to encourage students to acquire work experiences via internship and apprenticeships in different companies.

Last but not least, it is more and more acknowledged that school are not the only actors competent to fight against ESL. It is highly relevant to involve the local community preferably headed by the municipality, and the different local actors - including local businesses and the third sector in searching for ideas and strategies to tackle ESL.

2.2 CHALLENGES FACED BY PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (INCLUDING HOST) IN THEIR EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES RELATED TO THE THEME OF THE VISIT. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES? ARE THEY COMMON CHALLENGES? IF SO, WHY? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

All of the participating states cope with structural challenges. How to reduce the gap between different stages of education - e.g. primary and secondary education, secondary and higher secondary education? How to ensure smooth transition between them? Most of the education systems are quite rigid in relation to choices of vocations, professions and it is very difficult to switch between different study fields within vocational training, not to mention the mobility from vocational schools to different types of secondary schools.

Individualised care and education is discussed in all of the countries, however benefits of coaching and mentoring - supporting personal development of students, making them acknowledge their abilities and their options - are common only in limited number of cases depending mostly on the decision of the school management. A crucial question is how to attract, how to motivate students, how to make them feel comfortable in the schools.

Transition from education to the labour market also needs to be strengthened in most of the states requiring deeper cooperation with employers and companies in order to integrate their demands and ideas into the teaching process.

In different states there are different quality controls, differently designed state financing systems. The real challenge is how to fine-tune the system in order to provide sufficient motivation for the school, to give municipalities and regions possibility to respond to local needs, to be innovative, to ensure maximum flexibility in realization and allocate sufficient financial support and set achievable targets.

2.3 NAME AND DESCRIBE EFFECTIVE AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED THAT PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (BOTH HOST AND PARTICIPANTS) APPLY TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES MENTIONED IN QUESTION 2.2. PLEASE MENTION SPECIFIC COUNTRY EXAMPLES.

During the study visit the group has seen a lot of innovative, inspiring and enriching practices. Table 1 summarizes most of them, however let us mention those, which the group considers the most outstanding ones.

The group found the Success class at the Konig Willem I College (NL) a perfect idea how to reduce drop-outs based on unfortunate choice of vocational training. It offers a 6-8 week long intermediary programme which is primarily a course aimed to reveal the students personality and abilities, to strengthen their identity and self-esteem, to enhance self-reflection and to make them realize their opportunities. After finishing the students need to decide about the next step staying at education and continue studies at the same study field, or to find a more suitable vocation.

Similarly, but in a more general sense, less-focused on a specific target group, counselling, coaching and mentoring appear as one of the most effective

methods of assistance for ESL. The benefits of counselling offered both for students and parents were demonstrated by one of the Italian participants, who was personally involved in the activity. Individual talks and the specific attention devoted to students are often essential in order to aid students' development, in strengthening students' self-esteem and self-confidence. The main point is to guide students to think about their future instead of giving recommendations and offering solutions.

Besides the above-mentioned assets of the method, the added value of the Mentoring Program of the Friesland College is that it prompts deeper cooperation between VETs and SMEs by working with mentors mostly from the business sector, thus facilitating the linkage between supply and demand.

Transition from education to labour market is addressed by the municipality of 's-Hertogenbosch intended to help students finding internships. The municipality succeeded to engage influential businessmen as Ambassadors of the internship program. With their help the municipality can easily mediate between students and host companies. As admitted by the organizers of the programme one of risk-factors is to find the perfect matches in order to satisfy both parties. It is necessary to highlight that the town of 's-Hertogenbosch was an excellent example of how fruitful can be the pro-active attitude of the municipality and effort to cooperate with the schools in fight against ESL, youth unemployment and relating issues.

Project Playing for success used the stimulating environment of the Hague Football Stadium and charming world of football-players as a means to motivate students, teach them in a cheerful and playful manner and make them aware of their abilities and positive qualities. The project focuses on under-achieving children at the age of 9-14 years as well as on youngsters at the age of 15-23 years. The latter group of students are consciously directed more to world of labour market, offering them internships at the end of the 10-12 week long programmes.

Limited attention is devoted to active involvement of parents into the life of schools. An inspiring practise called Parents' coffee was presented by our French fellow. The parents participate in the food preparation. Due to the visits, they become active members of the inner community and gain better understanding of the issues within the schools.

2.4 ASSESSMENT OF THE TRANSFERABILITY OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES. COULD ANY EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE PRESENTED IN THIS REPORT BE APPLIED AND TRANSFERRED TO OTHER COUNTRIES? IF SO, WHY? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

During the study-visit the group has witnessed a lot of innovative ideas and practices triggering interesting discussions, and the group has drawn several lessons, which are highly relevant in respect to transferability. The most crucial factor is willingness and effort at all levels - to devote time and energy to identify local issues and needs, to come up with ideas, to take tailor-made

measures. Another keyword is flexibility and openness. You need a system, a national, regional framework which enables or even encourages and provides social and financial support to take initiative. Last, but not least cooperation at various levels and forms starting from the cooperation between the student and the teacher, between different types of schools, between the schools and the municipality, via cooperation with the business sector, social services, cooperation with the third sector and last but not least cooperation with the parents. Engagement of these primarily local stakeholders can highly facilitate the successful realization of various projects. Therefore transferability of ideas is highly dependent on the local circumstances, local actors, local capabilities and willingness, but mostly on the autonomy the national framework ensures for local actions.

In addition to these, other factors must be taken into consideration such as the characteristics of the free labour market. If there is high demand for qualified workers it tends to be easier to engage employers and companies. If unemployment rate is high, it can motivate people to gain higher education on the hand, but it can distract students of worth of studying as well. The financial crisis experienced in the past years has considerable impact as many states were forced to do budget cuts and reduce subsidies.

3. Creating networks of experts, building partnerships for future projects is another important objective of the study visit programme.

The group was very heterogeneous in respect the professional background. All members of the group have easily adapted and formed a cooperative and supportive group. The participants as well as the host organizations expressed their willingness for further cooperation. These mostly entail Comenius programmes as well as various community-building projects involving students and education related issues. For example there are ideas for further cooperation between Sweden and Germany concerning quality management in schools for adults. Moreover, the participants indicated the networking opportunity, the intellectually enriching discussions and the free flow of ideas as one of the most precious benefits of the study visit.

TO SUM UP

4. What is the most interesting/useful information that the group believes should be communicated to others? To whom, do you think, this information will be of most interest?

One of the participants stated “Schools are not hospitals!” Education institutions cannot provide a cure for the problem, which suits all students. The issue of ESL can be approached from various aspects ranging from focus on individualized training, via mentoring, internship or activities increasing motivation of the students. Schools need to be flexible and innovative in planning the strategy that responds the most to the local issues. However to achieve the aims the schools require partners. They need to get the relevant stakeholders interested and engaged, to make them see their social responsibility in tackling ESL. Therefore the group would recommend dissemination of these best-practices not only within the field of education, but raise awareness among employers and in the business sector as well as local municipalities should be encouraged to be more pro-active. As the group has seen, joint effort can give the most extensive impetus for creativity and innovation.

II Organisation of the visit

1. Discuss within the group and check if you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please mark only one box (☑) that expresses most closely the opinion of the entire group. Please use Question 2 of this section to elaborate on your responses, if needed.

		All agree	Most agree	Most disagree	All disagree	Not applicable
e.g.	The size of the group was good.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.1.	The programme of the visit followed the description in the catalogue.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2.	There was a balance between theoretical and practical sessions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3.	Presentations and field visits were linked in a coherent and complementary manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.	The topic was presented from the perspectives of the					

		All agree	Most agree	Most disagree	All disagree	Not applicable
	following actors of the education and training system in the host country:					
1.4.1.	government and policy-makers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.2.	social partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.4.3.	heads of institutions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.4.	teachers and trainers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.5.	students/trainees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.6.	users of services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5.	There was enough time allocated to participants' presentations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6.	The background documentation on the theme provided before the visit helped to prepare for the visit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.7.	Most of the group received a programme well in advance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.8.	The information provided before the visit about transportation and accommodation was useful.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.9.	The organiser accompanied the group during the entire programme.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.10.	The size of the group was appropriate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.11.	The group comprised a good mixture of participants with diverse professional backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.12.	There were enough opportunities for interaction with representatives of the host organisations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.13.	There was enough time allocated for discussion within the group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.14.	The Cedefop study visits website provided information that helped to prepare for the visit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. If you have any comments on the items 1.1. - 1.14 above, please write them in the box below.

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III Summary

1. Having summarised all your reflections and impressions, please indicate how satisfied you are with your participation in the study visit. Indicate the number of participants for each category, e.g.

Very
satisfied

11

Very
satisfied

11

Satisfied

1

Somewhat
satisfied

Not
satisfied

Neither satisfied
nor dissatisfied

2. What elements and aspects of the study visits do you think could be changed or improved?

Every morning and every evening there should be a brief group discussion. The group would encourage presenters to use interactive, participative methods. Last but not least the group would suggest to start with a more personally oriented presentations - e.g. to provide more information on the participant's background, experiences, etc. In another words the group would recommend an organized network session at Sunday evening.

3. If there is anything else you would like to write about that is not included in the above questions, please feel free to write below or attach a separate sheet.

The organization was excellent, however the group would appreciate more moderated study visits with clearer structure, with a person responsible to facilitate discussion and pinpoint on the essence of the programmes if it necessary. The group is grateful for Tonnie van Opstal's hard work organizing the study visit. The group would like to thank Peter Leujten for his contribution and effort to make the study visits smooth and more effective.